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BIOGRAPHY.

MRS. SARAH GILL.

EXTRACTS FROM HER DIARY.—*Continued from page 164.*

*Breathings after God.*

O ! thou unbounded, self-sufficient Being ! thou object of my happiness ! thou fountain of my bliss ! let me implore thy favour. This restless soul was formed by thee, and formed capable of happiness : my aspiring mind aims at it ; O, direct my search ! Let my ambition terminate on thee ! on thee let my whole delight be placed, my wishes centre ! 'Tis not in any inferior good to satisfy me. Friends are precious—outward enjoyments pleasant—intellectual attainments far better—but to know thee, to love thee, to enjoy thy smiles, this is my life. I am not, I never can be, satisfied without thee. With thee I am full and happy, I am rich, I am more than contented. In thee I possess all that my nature is capable of—amidst storms I am calm—in solitude I have a companion—in sickness I have ease. This is my highest felicity, (I can have nor desire greater) that “thou art mine, and I am thine.” And may a worthless worm, a clod, a nothing, yea, a sinful nothing, dare to speak it ? Let heaven be astonished, and earth amazed !—What ! dare to love a God ! Low lie, my soul, and humbly list what God himself approves. Thou knowest my inmost desires, and art acquainted with my most secret thoughts ; and, O my sacred witness ! may I not appeal to thee, and say, my supreme delight is in God !

*Ever the same* is the object of my bliss, ever active is the principle within me—therefore ever in pursuit of a something to make amends for its earnest desires. And where is that something ? where have I found it ? the world affords nothing but toil, vanity and tumult : friendship is but a partial, and ease a temporary, pleasure : riches give no satisfaction to my mind ; books and study, my favourite employments, will not please al-

ways. Abstracted from sensitive things, far from all finite views, I have had happy moments. My mind has been raised to a noble elevation; I have even not only despised all other low objects, but looked on *myself* with contempt. What can thus degrade myself in my own eyes? what thus exalt a soul so self-debased? Why, O my soul, art thou so unable to answer? 'Tis unanswerable—and yet this more than answers: a God fills all, is all, and all in all. 'Tis a relation to him that makes me any thing; separate from this, being is nothing, or worse than nothing, a curse. O, let me be thine! be this my whole desire. Infinite fulness is ready to communicate full happiness. O, transporting, heart-enlivening thought! I'll dwell on it—I'll live on it—yes, I'll dwell near this fountain. Be gone, ye lying cheats of sense. Adieu, ye gaudy trifles. My soul springs forth, and grasps superior bliss. Perfect excellence is the beauty I pant to see; I cannot descend to love a lesser; no, all other love is coldness, is perfect indifference, to this divine ardour.

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“THE Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are they that wait for him.” He knows when is the fittest time to bestow such or such a particular favour: he knows how to prepare me for the reception of it, and he knows when I am prepared. How often have I impatiently pursued, desired, and prayed for a mercy he has seemed to deny! I have gone on to seek, till, almost discouraged, have been ready to think either I was wrong in seeking, or it was in vain to seek; and, just as I have been giving it over as *a gone case*, his mercy has surprised me; I have been brought out of long distress into great light and peace. Then I have seen reason to bless him for delaying till *that very time*; and the timing of the providence has enhanced the value of the mercy.

'Tis wise to wait for God's time, seeing he knows and will order every thing in the very best time. 'Tis wise as 'tis my interest, and 'tis so as 'tis my duty. Adored be his goodness, who has condescended to join the duty, the interest and the comfort of his people in one. They are blessed that dutifully wait for him—blessed even *in waiting*—never happier than when quietly waiting for his salvation. There is a rest, a peace, a satisfaction, in waiting, that the enjoyment in itself cannot give: blessed also *when they receive* that for which they waited. Many a Christian has blessed God for delaying his favours, and thereby leading through many exercises of faith, of hope, of humble prayer, which never had been added to their experiences, if he had given immediate, sensible answers; and those views they have had of God, and experiences of divine things they have met with on those occasions, have been some of the  
brightest



brightest evidences of their grace, and most eminent experiences of their lives; and they can witness to the blessedness of waiting for him. And surely I must yield my testimony to this! I have proved it!

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O, GOD of grace! God of love! return to me, or never more shall my soul have rest. I wander in an endless circle of misery, and can find nought to solace me, without a God. My outward circumstances on all accounts are as agreeable as I desire: but, ah! what avails the shining of the sun to prisoners shut in a dark dungeon! No more does all I enjoy make me happy, until I see thy beauty, and read thy love in the smiles of thy benign countenance on me! O, thou Majesty Divine! my soul panteth for thee! my heart crieth for the living God! to see thy power and thy glory as thou art revealing it to some, and as I have seen it in former gladsome days in thy sanctuary! O when shall I once more see and feel a present God! To-morrow is a high festival to the Lord! to-morrow Jesus has appointed a banquet! and will he call me there—call me, not as Esther called Haman, to procure his punishment, but as HE in the days of his flesh called his dear disciples to hold intimate, endearing fellowship with them! It may be the last sacrament I shall ever attend—the last opportunity to sit with Christ at his table! O may the attendance be an emblem of the marriage supper of the Lamb in his Father's house above! O to meet THEE there, my adorable Jesus! there to give myself to thee! there to receive thee in all thy glorious characters, thy sacred and saving offices, and there to drink of the fatness of thine house! My soul desires to seek and wait for thee, more than morning watchers, weary of a cold and dark night, look for the dawn of day! My soul *must*, and if thou assist it *shall*, follow hard after thee! O, I cannot be without thee! thy presence is my life! Be not angry while I ask for life—my happiness through eternity is embottomed on the plea!

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HOW excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore, will I put my trust in thee. How glorious was my God, my King, this morning, in the galleries of his grace! What the riches of his love! I went early with desire to meet him; I went to see his beauty, and inquire in his temple. My heart was on the search for God. And, O, marvellous to relate! he meeteth sinners! He, the high, the lofty and the holy God, meeteth the vilest and the chief of all the guilty race! He met me in that most glorious declaration, *Isai.* xli. 17, 18. He met me in the cordial truths deduced from them. He opened a river on the high place of his ordinances; and he caused me

to see a fountain in the valley of perplexing fears. O what grace, what fulness, resides in the Mediator! What fulness has he to bestow on our poor, needy, panting souls! and how free, how ready to bestow them! yea, how desirous is he to shower them on us! as desirous is he to confer, as intent upon it, as he was to purchase them. What remains then for me, but to open my mouth wide, to expand my heart, and welcome the effusion of divine influences! Away my indifference, away my unbelief; lie down at the breast of that promise above, and draw consolation; be satisfied with the bliss it ensures, be delighted with the good it confers: O, my soul, haste, haste to thy solace! Here is marrow and fatness; here all desirables. I bid a glad adieu to every thing else as my *good*, and take my *God for my all*, to love him, and to live upon him. I will not love husband, parent, friends, houses, lands, riches, pleasures, nor any thing, in comparison with MY GOD, MY ALL!

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*Sketch of the Character of Mrs. SARAH EDWARDS, Consort of the Rev. JONATHAN EDWARDS, President of New-Jersey College.*

MRS. SARAH EDWARDS, the amiable consort of President Edwards, was born in New Haven, in Connecticut, Jan. 9, 1709-10. Her father was the Rev. Mr. James Pierpoint, who was long an eminently godly and useful minister of the gospel at New Haven.\* She was married to Mr. Edwards July 20, 1727, in the 18th year of her age.

Though Mrs. Edwards's full character will not be attempted here, yet it is thought proper to mention a few things, in which she excelled, and set an example worthy the imitation of all.

She remembered her Creator in the days of her youth, and became truly and remarkably religious at about five years old. She was a more than ordinary beautiful person; of a pleasant, agreeable countenance; of an amiable, courteous conversation and behaviour: the law of kindness was in her tongue.

She was eminent for her piety and experimental religion. Religious conversation was much her delight; and this she promoted in all companies, as far as was proper and decent for her: and her discourse shewed her understanding in divine things, and the great impression they had on her mind. The friends of true religion, and they who were ready to engage in religious conversation,

\* He was the eldest son of Mr. John Pierpoint of Roxbury, who came out of England. Her mother was Mrs. Mary Pierpoint, eldest daughter of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Hooker, minister of the gospel at Farmington in Connecticut, and son of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Hooker, once minister of the gospel at Hartford, and famous as a divine through all the churches in New England.



conversation, and delighted in that which was most essential and practical in true religion, were her peculiar friends and intimates; to whom she would open her mind freely, and tell them the exercises of her own heart, and what God had done for her soul, for their encouragement and excitement in the ways of God. Her mind appeared, to them who were most conversant with her, constantly to attend to divine things, even on all occasions, and in all business of life.

The religious duties of the closet she was a great friend to, and took much delight in them. She highly prized social worship; was wont to attend the private meetings for religious worship, and promoted and attended meetings of her own sex only, in order for prayer and religious conversation. She was a constant attender on public worship, and behaved with great gravity and seriousness in the house of God.

She was a good economist, managing her household affairs with discretion; in which she was laborious and diligent. She was very careful that nothing should be wasted and lost. And often, when she did any thing to save a small matter, or directed her children to do it in any instance, or saw them waste any thing, she would mention the words of our Saviour; which, she said, she often thought of, as containing a maxim worth remembering; when as the reason why his disciples should gather up the fragments, he says, *that nothing be lost*.

She had an excellent way of governing her children: she knew how to make them regard and obey her cheerfully without loud, angry words, or heavy blows. She seldom struck her children a blow; and in speaking to them used mild, gentle and pleasant words. If any correction was needful, it was not her manner to give it in a passion. And when she had occasion to reprove and rebuke, she would do it in few words, without heat and noise, with all calmness and gentleness of mind. And in her directions or reproofs, in any matters of importance, she would address herself to the reason of her children, that they might not only know her inclination and will, but at the same time be convinced of the reasonableness of it. She need speak but *once*; she was cheerfully obeyed; murmuring and answering again was not known among them. And the kind and gentle treatment they had from their mother, while she strictly and punctually maintained her parental authority, seemed naturally to beget and promote a filial regard and respect, and lead them to a mild, tender treatment of each other; for quarrelling and contention, as it frequently takes place among children, was not known among them. She carefully observed the first appearances of resentment and ill-will towards any in her young children, and did not connive at it and promote it, as many who have the care of children do, but was careful to shew her displeasure

pleasure at it, and suppress it to her utmost ; not by angry, wrathful words and blows, which often provoke children to wrath, and stir up and confirm their irascible passions, rather than abate and suppress them.

As she was sensible that in many respects the chief care of forming children, by government and instruction, naturally lies on mothers ; as they are most with their children in their most pliable age, when they commonly receive impressions by which they are very much formed for life ; so she was very careful to do her part in this important business.

But this was not all in which she expressed her care for her children. She thought that parents had a great and important duty to do towards their children before they were capable of government and instruction. For them she constantly and earnestly prayed, and bore them on her heart before God in all her secret and most solemn addresses to him.

As the law of kindness was in her tongue, so her hands were not withheld from beneficence and charity. She was always a friend and patroness of the poor and helpless ; and much in *acts* of charity, as well as recommending it to others on all proper occasions.

She was remarkable for her kindness to her friends and visitors. She would spare no pains to make them welcome, and provide for their convenience and comfort. And she was peculiarly kind to strangers who came to her house. She would take such kind and special notice of such, and so soon get acquainted with them, as it were, and shew such regard and concern for their comfort, and so kindly offer what she thought they needed, as to discover she knew the heart of a stranger, and well understood how to do it good ; and so as to oblige them to feel in some measure as if they were at home.

She made it her rule to speak well of all, so far as she could with truth, and justice to herself and others. She was not wont to dwell with delight on the imperfections and failings of any ; and when she heard persons speaking ill of others, she would say what she thought she could with truth and justice in their excuse, or divert the obloquy by mentioning those things that were commendable in them. Thus she was tender of every one's character, even of theirs who injured and spoke evil of her ; and carefully guarded against the too common vice of evil speaking and backbiting. She could bear injuries and reproach with great calmness and patience, without any disposition to render evil for evil ; but, on the contrary, was ready to pity and forgive those who appeared to be her enemies.

She had long told her intimate friends, that she had, after long struggles and exercises, obtained by God's grace an habitual willingness to die herself, or part with any of her most near relatives,



atives. And when she had the greatest trial in the death of Mr. Edwards, she found the help and comfort of such a disposition. Her conversation and conduct on this occasion was even to the admiration of her friends. It was such as discovered that she was sensible of the great loss she and her children had sustained in his death, and at the same time shewed that she was quiet and resigned, and had those invisible supports and comforts by which she could trust in God with quietness, hope and humble joy.

### CONCERNING THE DUTY OF A CHURCH TO CENSURE ITS MEMBERS FOR THE SIN OF HERESY.

[Concluded from page 167.]

SOME say, that, as none ought to be considered as heretics who acknowledge the Bible to be the word of God, and profess to build their religious sentiments upon it, so none ought to be censured for their religious errors, who are willing to bear the Christian name. The answer to this is easy. It is as fatal to deny the fundamental truths of the Bible, as to deny the Bible itself. The Apostle tells us, that men may *pervert* the gospel, and wrest the *scripture* to their *own destruction*. The guilt and danger of *error*, as well as of *vice*, are greatly enhanced by a real belief of the inspiration of the scriptures. This bare belief, therefore, is no reason why professors of religion should not be censured and excommunicated, for either gross errors or open criminality.

Some call it persecution in a church, to censure their members for heresy. But nothing can be more diverse from persecution, than the proper exercise of church discipline. This is naturally adapted to enlighten the understanding and convince the conscience of an heretic, therefore the best kind of remedy that can be used to cure him of his mental disorder, and prepare him for the service of God. But persecution, which consists in corporeal punishments, can have no other effect upon the erroneous, than to destroy them both in time and eternity. While the scripture, therefore, requires a church to discipline their members for dangerous and fatal errors, it forbids them to persecute and destroy men for their grossest heresies and delusions.

Some object against censuring any for heresy, because it tends to promote animosity and contention among both the friends and enemies of the gospel. It cannot be denied, that bad as well as good effects have sometimes followed from the excommunication of heretics; but this is nothing more than Christ forewarned his friends to expect. Religion cannot be preserved in its purity and simplicity, in this dark and wicked world, without

out strife and contention. Christians are required to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; nor can they be engaged in a more noble and important contest. It is better they should contend, than to lose the faith, and suffer Christianity to be corrupted and destroyed. If they contend according to the spirit and rules of the gospel, whatever evil consequences may follow, they must be charged to the account of those who are enemies to the truth.

The sincerity of heretics is often urged, with great confidence and considerable plausibility, against their being censured for their erroneous sentiments. This is readily granted, that heretics may have that kind of sincerity which is opposite to hypocrisy and pretence. They may really believe the errors which they avow and propagate. But saying that they are sincere in this sense, is only saying that they are really as great heretics as they pretend to be: and if there be any criminality in embracing fundamental errors, this kind of sincerity does not diminish, but really aggravate, their guilt. But if those who say that heretics may be sincere, mean by it, that they may be free from bias, prejudice and partiality, then their saying that they may be sincere, is saying a great deal in their favour, and quite enough to screen them from the censure of any Christian church. This plea in favour of heretics ought to have no weight, until it be proved, that those who are free from bias, prejudice and partiality, *can* imbibe gross and fundamental errors. But how can this be proved? It cannot be proved from the declaration of heretics, nor from their fair moral character. A man of common honesty and fair moral character may be an atheist, or a deist, or the grossest heretic. It cannot be proved from scripture, which always represents corrupt sentiments as flowing from a corrupt heart. It cannot be proved from reason. It is absurd to suppose, that a man free from bias, prejudice and partiality can search the scripture, and honestly endeavour to discover the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, but, after all, embrace errors directly opposed to these doctrines, and become an heretic. The absurdity lies here. On this supposition, the fault would fall, not on the sincere heretic, but on the Author of the Bible, in not making the revelation of his will plain enough to be understood by those who heartily desire to discover it. Either the sincerity of heretics must be given up, or else the fulness and perfection of divine revelation. But to give up the sufficiency of the scriptures to make men wise unto salvation, is too great a sacrifice in favour of those who embrace and avow fatal errors.

Now, if it be the duty of every Christian church to discipline its members, who maintain and propagate essential errors, it certainly deserves particular attention at the present day. The  
most



most catholic must allow, that there are sentiments prevailing, which, in their view, are extremely dangerous, if not absolutely fatal, to the souls of men. It is well known, that the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church in America, are more strict in censuring what they call heresy, than our Congregational Churches in New England. We have become extremely lax in this point of duty. Ought we not immediately to turn our attention to this subject, and express proper zeal in purging out that leaven among us, which threatens to leaven the whole lump? Our fathers, who planted our churches, took great pains to point out the most essential doctrines of the gospel, and to set up barriers against the spread of fatal errors, which they foresaw were coming in like a flood upon this once pure branch of the Christian Church. Their pious instructions and examples call upon us to exert ourselves faithfully in the promotion of truth, and the suppression of error. But we ought to take still more earnest heed to what Christ himself says, by his Spirit, to the churches, upon this very subject. He says to the church of Pergamos, "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that *hold the doctrine* of Balaam, who taught the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that *hold the doctrine* of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." He gives the same reproof to the church of Thyatira, for neglecting to censure heretics: "Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, *to teach and seduce* my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." Christ still walks in the midst of his golden candlesticks, and condemns the same things in our churches, which he condemned in the churches of Asia. His admonitions to them apply to us in their full force and obligation. We are bound, by his divine authority, to use all proper means to prevent and suppress the prevalence of fatal errors among us. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

PHILONOUS.

## LETTERS ON SOLITARY DEVOTION,

From PASCAL to JULIA.

### LETTER V.

**Y**OUR own spiritual progress, my dear Julia, in the divine life, as an interest purely personal, is another consideration of great weight to impress you with an abiding sense of the importance of maintaining a strict and persevering devotion. The doctrine of disinterested love does not involve the idea of our being uninterested in our own personal good. Rightly understood,

flood, it requires the opposite. We are bound to feel the same solicitude for our own individual welfare which it is reasonable for another person to feel. The divine law has placed us and our neighbours on a level as objects of affection. We are to feel indifferent to neither, but impartially friendly to both. You will not consider me, then, as advocating the selfish sentiment, when I urge your own personal advancement in the spiritual and divine life as a motive to devotion. It is desirable, my dear Julia, it is very desirable in itself. If it had no beneficent effect upon others, in an insulated view it is ardently to be wished. To know more of God, of his designs and government, of the feelings of his heart, of his works of creation, providence and redemption; to have a more enlarged acquaintance with our blessed Saviour; to become more and more thoroughly initiated into the scheme of Christian doctrine, and Christian experience; to be increasingly crucified to the world, and to have a growing faith, converting into realities the great things promised to them who love God; are among those more excellent gifts, which, above all other things, we ought earnestly to covet. Now the direction of JAMES comes in here aptly, pointing out to us the way to seek all this with certain success: "If any man lack wisdom," says he, "let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not." To this most promising expedient Paul had recourse in behalf of the growing piety of the Ephesians. "For this cause," he assures them, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Not only have we leave to pray for such a proficiency in spiritual things, believing that we shall be heard; it being impossible that we should be more ready to ask, than God is to communicate, in things agreeable to his will; but a feeling, habitual devotion familiarizes the mind to spiritual things, is the best school for a religious education, separates us from impure company and debasing objects, carries us out of the reach of our greatest enemy, naturally associates with it reading and meditation, sanctifies and meetens for glory.

Your personal comfort, if it may with propriety be mentioned as a matter of distinct consideration, so necessarily depends upon keeping up an habitual devotional communion with God, that in no other way is it possible. You know, I trust, what  
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real comfort is; you know that it consists in the enjoyment of God; in those spiritual discoveries and affections which the Divine Spirit imparts. "When God," in this manner, "giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?" To the mind of a considerate person, who believes in the general doctrines of a God, a moral government, perfectly wise and holy, and a future state, and who lives in the constant neglect of solitary devotion, or who is conscious that if he performs it at all, it is through the mere dread of his anger, a sense of guilt must be perpetually suggested. Such a person must say in his own reflections, "Is there any being in the universe with whom I ought to be so much concerned to be acquainted as with God? Do not the glory of his nature, and my dependence upon him, bind me to fly to him as my supreme good? Why do not I pray to him? Is it because I have not capacity, opportunity, or leave from him? Is it because I, as a sinner, have no medium of access, and no sufficient invitation to encourage me to seek him? No. The scriptures are full of assurances of the opposite. Is it because I have cares and engagements, on account of which I may be lawfully excused? No. For I am invited to cast all my care upon God, who careth for those who do so. Can I plead my want of utterance, my ignorance, or my guilt, as an obstacle to my acceptable performance of this duty? No. I am disarmed of all such defence in that explicit, repeated declaration of the Saviour, in which there is neither reserve nor exception on any ground—"He who asketh, receiveth; and he who seeketh, findeth; and to him who knocketh, it shall be opened." What then prevents my flying to God, the all-present God, in humble and dutiful prayer? Nothing but the wicked reluctance of my own heart. My heart is full of disinclination; while it is inclined enough to the follies of the vain world. And whither will this wickedness of heart carry me? Eternity is near. Soon must I give up my account; perhaps without much farther opportunity." Such reflections must terrify. And well grounded terror respecting the final loss of heaven must dispel every beam of comfort. The intimacy of a sincere and constant devotion, on the other hand, as it assimilates to God, divorces from the world, and strengthens hope, even so as naturally to beget the full assurance of it; must dissipate fear, and gladden the soul with anticipations of heaven. Precious comforts are those which result from the lifting up of the light of the Divine Countenance upon the soul. These are emphatically the kisses of his lips. This is, in the spiritual intercourse, what gold is in the commercial. "There be," says the Psalmist, "many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put glad-  
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ness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in *peace*, and sleep, for thou, O Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." What confidence, what a serene peace of soul, what a sense of perfect safety, even in the midst of ruffians, or in a prison, does this enjoyment of the light of the Divine Countenance inspire! Humble devotion, if I may so say without irreverence, and I think I may, is the hand which draws the veil aside. The time is coming, it may not be far distant, when probably you will have personal or domestic afflictions. "The days of darkness are many." What a source of comfort it must be to you, under these afflictions, to have that peculiar ability to cast all your cares upon God, which must result from long devotional acquaintance and familiarity with him! Besides, the day of your dissolution, my much beloved friend, is drawing near, when a death-like paleness will sit upon that healthful countenance of yours, when every earthly tie will be severed, and you will have a vast eternity immediately in view. What a comfort then the testimony of a good conscience, and feeling readiness, in sensible communion with God! What a comfort to be able to rest in the bosom of God, as in the embraces of your long tried, your most familiar and your best friend! Ah! the mortal scene is the moment when piety triumphs. Then it pays the full arrearage, with profit incalculable. Then it is found that no praying breath is spent in vain. Hoping that these considerations will abide with you, to confirm you in your pious resolutions, I take leave for the present with renewed assurances that with great esteem

I am, &c.

P. S. I shall, God willing, set off on my intended journey to Portland to-morrow. When I return I hope to find a letter from you. May our Heavenly Father have us both in his holy keeping.

## THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD ILLUSTRATED.

[Continued from page 175.]

### INFERENCES AND REMARKS.

I. **W**ILL it not follow, from the preceding observations, that all events, which ever have or will take place, were unalterably fixed and determined in the Divine Mind, from eternity?

This consequence we apprehend will inevitably follow, if God be immutable. And that he is, we think has been proved beyond reasonable controversy. We have seen that he is underrived, self-existent, and in the most glorious and exalted sense



sense independent—that there never was, and never can be, the least alteration in his views and feelings, or in any one of his perfections. He as well knew, infinite ages before any event or effect took place, what things would take place under his administration, as he now does. And he was as accurately determined concerning the existence of every event, *then*, as *now*, or as he will be at any future period of duration; because he has ever been immutable in his views, feelings, designs and purposes. To say that any event whatever has taken place in the universe contrary to God's eternal designs and determinations, is either to deny his omnipotence, and say he could not prevent it, or that he has altered his determinations. But the latter cannot be true, because he is immutable. And we will not indulge the thought that God is unable to accomplish any event which he pleases. Hence, we conclude that no event has taken place contrary to his eternal purposes.

Again: We cannot suppose that God is indifferent concerning the existence of any event which ever has, or will take place. Because his goodness, which is infinite, will prompt him to choose that all those, and none but those, events should take place which his wisdom sees, on the whole, to be best; therefore he must be determined in his own mind concerning the existence of all events, and he must have been determined from eternity; for his wisdom taught and his goodness disposed precisely then as they have since. No sufficient reason can be assigned why God should *now*, or at any future period of duration, choose that *this* event should take place, rather than *that*, which did not exist in his mind from eternity. He needed not the benefit of experiment, in order to a correct and final decision. Among the vast number of intelligent beings who exist in the universe, the Infinite God is the only one who is incapable of improvement. He is no older, wiser, stronger or better now than he was millions of ages before creation commenced. Nor will he be any older, wiser, stronger or better, interminable ages beyond the judgment of the great day, than he is now. It is common for mankind to say, that, were they to live their lives over again, they should conduct very differently. They *imagine* they should avoid many of the mistakes and imprudences which they have committed, and make great improvements in knowledge and virtue. But these things cannot be true with application to the Infinite Jehovah. For, should all creatures and things in the universe be this moment annihilated, God possessing the same character which he did from eternity, he would begin the work of creation again, and do the same things which he has done. His wisdom would dictate and his goodness choose precisely the same plan of government. It would be impossible for him to make the least emendation or improvement

ment upon the former system. For among so many possible systems of government, it would be a solecism in language to say that all, or any two of them, are best. Among the whole, there can be but one best. And *that* it is the very nature of Infinite Goodness to choose. And since God is infinitely wise and good, such is that plan of government which he actually has adopted, and under which we live. And since he is what he is, he must have been unalterably fixed and determined, from eternity, concerning the existence of all events, from the largest to the most minute, which ever have or will take place. And since he is determined concerning the existence of future events, his determinations must be accomplished, for he is immutable. Indeed, when God has once determined that an event shall take place, it has then virtually taken place. Nothing is wanting to its complete accomplishment, only that the object now existing in the Divine Mind should be manifested to the view of creatures. When this is done, they are prepared to say that such a particular event is accomplished. But their seeing it was not the cause of its taking place; nor did it make any alteration in the nature, certainty, or real cause of the event. God's knowledge, feelings and purposes concerning it were exactly the same before creatures had any conception of it, as afterwards. The same is true concerning all events which ever have or will exist. The exhibition of things to the view of creatures does not alter God's feelings and determinations concerning them, any more than the declaration of a man's feelings, to his friend, alters his feelings. They were the same before he manifested them to his friend as afterwards. "From the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Perception, in the order of nature, precedes speech; and determination precedes execution. These observations apply, with equal pertinency, to the Supreme Being, as to mankind. He must possess determinations before he can communicate them to his creatures. And the same argument which will prove that he was determined concerning any one thing, even for the shortest duration before he communicated such determination, will prove that he must be equally determined concerning every thing, and that he must have been unalterably fixed and determined from eternity, for he is immutable. His determinations never began. The period in duration has never been, in which the Infinite God was destitute of a single perception, volition or determination which he now does, or ever will, possess. All these were coeval with his existence, and will continue the same. For with him "is no variableness, nor shadow of turning."

2. Will it not follow from the preceding observations, that all those objections which are made against the decrees of God, are equally pointed against his immutability? We have endeavoured



deavoured to prove that God is immutable. We have also endeavoured to make it appear that his immutability implies, that all events or effects which ever have or ever will take place, were unalterably fixed and determined in the Divine Mind from eternity. And do the decrees of God imply any thing more than such an eternal determination and fixedness? The Westminster Assembly of Divines, in their shorter catechism, have given the following definition of divine decrees: "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." The same general idea is communicated in their confession of faith, in words a little different. "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass."

We apprehend the preceding definition of divine decrees to be as rational, scriptural and correct, as any which can be given. This implies, that the decrees or purposes of God existed in his mind from eternity; that they then extended to all things and beings, that ever have or will exist; that all those events, and none but those, which God, from eternity, intended should take place, will, by a course of predetermined means, be accomplished; and that all these events stand connected, directly or indirectly, with the promotion of the divine glory, or the highest good of the intelligent system. But all these things, if we mistake not, we have shown to be implied in the divine immutability. Immutability necessarily involves the doctrine of general, particular, eternal and unalterable decrees. Hence, all those objections which militate against the truth and consistency of the latter, militate equally against the truth and consistency of the former. It is said by some that the decrees of God, in the sense above defined, are inconsistent with free agency, virtue and vice, and accountability in mankind. But if the decrees of God are inconsistent with these things, his immutability is inconsistent with them. For the latter implies as much determination and fixedness in the Divine Mind as the former. Hence, if this objection be well founded, in order that mankind may be free agents, capable of virtue and vice, and accountable for their conduct, God must become a mutable being. For so long as he is immutable he must unavoidably be determined and fixed with regard to all future events. And not only so, but so long as he *exists* he must be immutable; for immutability is as essential to and inseparable from his existence, as any one attribute which he possesses. Hence, according to the preceding objection, that mankind may be moral agents, and accountable creatures, God must not only become mutable, but he must cease to exist. But will the objector come forward and  
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maintain this doctrine? Will he pretend that rational creatures cannot be free agents, and suitable subjects of moral government, unless God become a mutable being, and be undetermined in his own mind concerning their future character and conduct? Nay, further, will he abide the natural consequence which results from his objection, and maintain that the Supreme God must even cease to exist before mankind can properly be considered accountable beings? If he shrink from these awful consequences, let him abandon his objection to the divine decrees. For so long as he retains his objection, and denies the above consequences, he is guilty of a palpable inconsistency.

3. Will it not follow from the preceding observations that those who are unwilling that God should determine all events, and oppose his sovereign decrees, of course, not only oppose his immutability, but likewise his foreknowledge or omniscience? Those who oppose the doctrine of divine decrees, because they imply an unalterable determination and fixedness concerning all events which ever have or will take place, must, if they are consistent with themselves, equally oppose foreknowledge, provided that imply as much certainty and fixedness as the decrees. And that this is really the case may, perhaps, be made to appear. It will not be denied by those who admit the omniscience of God, that he had as perfect a knowledge of all events which ever have or will take place, from eternity, as he has now, or will have at any future period of duration. And since he foreknew, before any event or effect took place, all those events which ever would take place, their future existence was as certain, in his own mind, as the most rigid decree could have made it. For it is impossible in the nature of things that God should foreknow that an event would exist, whose existence would never take place. To affirm this, is as inconsistent as to affirm, that a thing does and does not exist at the same time. Knowledge always implies *certainty*. This is true with application to mankind. A single thing cannot be named, concerning which they have more knowledge than certainty. They cannot possibly know that an object exists, which at the same time does not exist. They know that they exist themselves; but they could not possess this knowledge, unless their existence were a reality. They know that the sun rose this morning; but they could not possess this knowledge unless the event had actually taken place. In both these cases their knowledge is founded on fact, and implies absolute certainty. But these things cannot be said with regard to a single thing which is, to us, future. We believe the sun will rise to-morrow morning, and that many other things will take place; but we have not that knowledge, amounting to absolute certainty, concerning them, which we have concerning the facts before mentioned. "It is true, that an *opinion* or belief,



belief, that what is in fact true is false, may exist ; but the knowledge of a fact supposes the fact just as it is known. Belief and opinion may be erroneous, but knowledge can never err ; it is but a perception of truth ; and it is presumed that none of those who assert the prescience of God, regard it as a mere opinion, which may or may not be founded in truth. They ought to be presumed to mean that the knowledge which God has of the future acts of free agents is infallible ; and consequently that the proposition which affirms that such an action will infallibly take place, is infallibly true, or in other words, that it, being true, cannot possibly be rendered false. To render it false therefore is not an object of power. Omnipotence itself cannot produce an impossible effect, much less can it be supposed that a finite creature is endowed with a power sufficient for such an effect. But if I have a power to do a thing, which it was previously true that I should not do, I have power to render false that which was previously most infallibly true. Let it be further considered that as it was never true both that I should and should not do the same action, so the proposition which affects one of them must be false ; but to render that true which is false, is no more an object of power, than to change truth into falsehood. It is therefore equally impossible for me to do the action which it was previously foreknown that I should not do, as to omit doing what it was previously known I should do."

To illustrate the idea further, let us have recourse to the sun, before mentioned. If the sun is to rise to-morrow morning, God knows it as well now as he will after the event has actually taken place. If it will not rise, it is impossible that he should know that it will ; for he cannot know that a thing will be, which will not be. But if that event is to take place, it is the object of his present knowledge, and just as certain in his mind, as is the fact that the sun rose this morning. The same may be affirmed respecting all future events, whether they relate to the natural or moral world ; to the intellectual, moral or corporeal exercises of men ; to the time, place and circumstances under which they are born, live and die ; to their future happiness or misery.

No events can be future which are not known to God. And he cannot know that any events ever will take place whose existence is not just as certain, as is the existence of those which have already taken place. His knowledge concerning events which are to us future is precisely the same as concerning those which are past. God knows all those events which took place before the general deluge. They are certain. He could not know, however, that they have taken place, unless they really had. His knowledge concerning them presupposes their existence. In like manner he foreknows all those events which

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will exist, between the present moment and the day of judgment, and beyond that period, in eternity. But he could not foreknow them, unless they will certainly exist; for that which never did and never will exist, never was, and never can be, the object of *knowledge*. Thus the foreknowledge of God implies, that the future existence of the things foreknown is as certain, and as really founded on fact, in the Divine Mind, as is the existence of any one thing, which has ever taken place; consequently it is as certain, and as necessary, as the most immutable decree could make it. Its existence will infallibly take place, and therefore it may be, and really is, foreknown by the Omniscient God. Hence they who oppose and reject the doctrine of divine decrees because they represent God as having unalterably determined and fixed future events, those relating to the moral as well as natural world, must, if they are consistent with themselves, either deny the foreknowledge, and of course the omniscience, of God, or contend with him because he possesses this attribute. For the doctrine of foreknowledge unavoidably involves all the frightful consequences of fatalism, which can be drawn from the most unconditional and absolute decree of the immutable JEHOVAH.

We now cannot recollect a single objection which we have ever heard made against the doctrine of divine decrees, which may not with equal pertinency be offered against the divine foreknowledge and immutability. If these objections are properly traced, it will be found, that they are ultimately pointed against the character of the self-existent God. And, therefore, they are not only groundless, but awfully criminal. They imply that the objector is contending with his Maker, because he is such a being as he is; independent, sovereign, omniscient and immutable. But the objector had much better yield the controversy, for he will never obtain the victory. "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world," or from eternity, as it might with propriety have been translated. "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. He is in one mind, and who can turn him?"

HORATIO.

[To be continued.]

## RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE.

[Continued from p. 187.]

### CONFERENCE V.

*Prophecy proves the Divinity of Scripture.*

*Clerus.* **A** GREEABLY to expectation, Prophecy is the subject which invites our present attention.

*Theodore.* What is prophecy?

*Clerus.*



*Clerus.* It is the prediction of future actions and events. The prophet looks forward into futurity, and exactly foretels what shall come to pass.

*Theodore.* But how does the prediction of future events establish the divinity of scripture? For it is common for fortune-tellers to amuse and deceive people by their predictions.

*Theophilus.* Though fortune-tellers and false prophets sometimes guess, in a shrewd manner, they cannot look into futurity, and accurately foretel what will take place thousands of years after the predictions. To look into futurity, and accurately describe characters and events thousands of years previously to their existence, is the sole prerogative of God, or the peculiar province of those who are under the special agency of his Spirit.

*Theodore.* It is manifest that the most enlightened creatures, except when under the special guidance of Omniscience, neither know what event will take place next, nor what they shall do next, nor even what will be their next thought: for creatures, in every attitude of their existence, are absolutely dependent on God. The accurate knowledge of futurity is the attribute of God only, whose eye constantly pervades time and eternity. But what advantage do we derive from the Omniscience of God, in favour of the divinity of scripture?

*Theophilus.* It furnishes an argument, which if possible strikes the mind with more weight than mathematical demonstration. It is absolutely irresistible.

*Theodora.* How does this appear?

*Clerus.* Is not the Bible the most ancient book in the world? Have we not proved, in the preceding conferences, that Moses and the Prophets, the Evangelists and Apostles, were the authors of the Bible? Is it not a fact that the numerous predictions concerning Christ, which as clearly describe him, almost, as the history of his life, were actually written hundreds and many of them thousands of years before his nativity?

*Theodore.* It cannot be disputed: for from the alpha to the omega of the Old Testament Christ is the hero of the book. In short, while reading the Old Testament I feel impelled to style it the prophetic history of the Messiah. The spirit of inspiration saw him, and accurately described his character and operations, thousands of years previously to his birth: but what is the consequence?

*Theophilus.* The consequence is this, that the Bible, which contains these prophecies, was dictated by God: for he only pervades futurity, and can now accurately inform us what events will take place at any subsequent period.

*Neophytus.* The argument deserves attention, I confess; but pray, sir, how do we know that the prophecies were not borrowed from the history of Christ?

*Theophilus.*

*Theophilus.* For the same reason, if the comparison be admissible, that we know the light of the sun is not borrowed from the moon.

*Neophytus.* It is more easy, Theophilus, to confound young minds, than to enlighten and convince them. I know that the light of the sun does not depend on the moon: but I do not so readily see that the prophecies of the Old Testament could not be derived from the history of Christ in the New Testament. The argument taken from prophecy in favour of the divinity of scripture ought not, I think, to take it for granted that the history of Christ is divine: for if we were sure of the divinity of Christ's history, it would preclude the necessity of arguing from the fulfilment of prophecies. I, therefore, wish for direct evidence that the prophecies were not derived from the history of Christ. The comparison of Theophilus is not satisfactory.

*Clerus.* It is a fact, when Christ came into the world eighteen hundred years ago, that the prophecies, written in different languages, had been in the hands of the Jews many ages; and that they were waiting the advent of the Messiah. They possessed both the Hebrew copy and the Septuagint. Hence it is evident that the prophecies were anterior to the history of Christ several hundred and even thousands of years: and nothing but the depth of infidelity and ignorance can suggest that they were subsequent.

*Neophytus.* I have no reply to make: for the authenticity and genuineness of the Old Testament are as manifest as the sun.

*Theophilus.* The argument is valid; and demands additional confidence when we remember that the present dispersed, afflicted, despised and unbelieving state of the Jews is the exact fulfilment of ancient prophecy relative to that nation. Though Jews think not so, they are now both in that political and moral state which Moses and the Prophets, and which Christ and the Apostles, many ages ago clearly pointed out to their ancestors. How can any mortal enter the synagogue, and look an informed Jew in the face, and hear him tell his story, and disbelieve the spirit of prophecy, or reject the divinity of scripture? For even down to this day the Jews are God's witnesses. They are living, judicial monuments in favour of the inspiration of scripture.

*Clerus.* To conclude: If we survey the numerous prophecies concerning Christ, from the fall of Adam to the ascension of the Redeemer, in connexion with those which he delivered concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final calamities of the Jews; and attend to the undeniable fulfilment recorded on the faithful pages of history, we have the most unshaken evidence in favour of the inspiration of scripture from prophecy. The testimony glares like the noontide sun. It cannot be disputed except by those whose blindness and infidelity have gained



ed the entire mastery of reason and argument : for the character and office of Christ, the time and circumstances of his birth, life, death and resurrection, in connexion with the subsequent condition of the Jews, are so minutely foretold, and so accurately fulfilled, that more ample evidence cannot be desired. The evidence derived from the completion of prophecy is abundantly satisfactory, and must convince all men, except those who are given over to judicial blindness of mind and hardness of heart.

Having attended to the divinity of scripture as far as was expected when the subject was introduced, we shall improve it by several inferences and reflections, except some members of the conference desire to continue the inquiry.

*Theophilus.* To speak for myself particularly, I wish to attend to the subject more fully : but, from the conversation I had with some of the young members before you came into the hall, I believe it is best to dismiss it for the present.

*Lucinda.* My inclinations and judgment are consonant with my brother's. The subject is sublime, and necessary at the present day ; but other subjects also demand our attention.

*Clerus.* We will then dismiss it, and make our reflections freely and unreservedly as they occur. ———

*Eusebia.* We will thank you, sir, to lead the way : for we feel the peculiar need of example.

*Clerus.* The divinity of scripture at once invites us to contemplate the matchless grace of God, in furnishing man with the sacred volume. To make a suitable estimate of the Bible, which was early put into our hands, we have only to compare our advantages with the advantages of five or six hundred millions of the human race now on the earth, who never saw it. More than half the inhabitants of the world are now ignorant heathens. Alas ! how deplorable their condition ! They grope in the dark, though favoured with the volume of nature ; and are manifestly hastening down the dreadful steep to endless perdition. We have no evidence to conclude that the heathens are the subjects of salvation : “ For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? ” What Christian bosom does not melt before the object ? For though we all deserve to be left destitute of vision, and to be forever destroyed, we have the word of salvation in our hands. God is under no obligations to provide a Saviour for any of the guilty children of men. We have no legal claim to make but for eternal separation from all good, and subjection to irremediable ruin. But, to the admiration of angels, the door of salvation is opened before us by the atonement of Christ, which is clearly revealed in the divine pages. How merciful is God ! How inexpressibly gracious and com-

passionate

passionate is Christ! Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Contemplate, my young friends, the love of Christ. Behold him while leaving the realms of light to visit this criminal and ruined world! Behold him in the humble manger! Behold him in the trembling arms of his mother while flying before the bloody decree of Herod! Behold him going about to do good, when there was no resting place for his weary head and limbs! View him in the bloody garden! Look at him while wearing the crown of thorns! Alas! alas! behold him when not only despised by the world, and forsaken by his own family, but even when he was forsaken by God, because he was the substitute of sinners! Hear him say, It is finished! and behold him in his expiring moment! The sun veils his face, the earth quakes to her centre, the rocks rend, the graves open, and the universe is convulsed. But why all this? Why must the Son of God die on the cross? The answer is ready: to gratify divine benevolence; to glorify God in the salvation of sinners; to effect the highest enjoyment of the universe. But whence this information? From what source of instruction do we ascertain the good news of salvation? Blessed be God, from the Bible, which bears every signature of divinity! These are heavenly things, and that heavenly volume reveals them. When, O when shall we sufficiently praise God for his goodness and mercy displayed in the sacred pages! When shall we suitably thank God for the Bible! For what are thousands of silver and gold, yea, what are all the riches of the globe, compared with the treasures of God's word!

*Eusebia.* The subject is sublime. I am glad we have attended to the divinity of scripture. If not greatly deceived, the Bible was precious to me before we examined its divinity; but now, blessed be God, it appears more precious than ever. Shall we not, my dear companions, penitently review our misimprovement of it, and now resolve to read and contemplate it with more care and attention? Alas, dear girls! how many hours have we spent turning over the leaves of novels and foolish romances, to the sad neglect of God's book, which reveals the salvation of men! Shall we, can we ever be chargeable with such repeated guilt? Are we not passing through the most dangerous country? Have we any map, any sure guide, but this? Does it not contain all the instruction we need, both in times of prosperity and adversity? Let us diligently read it, and devoutly digest its contents, and it will be a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path. Have you, Sophia, nothing to say on this subject?

*Sophia.* Yes, my dear, I have many things; but I am afraid to open my mouth.

*Lucinda.*



*Lucinda.* Why, my dear, are you afraid to speak? Has not God opened your heart since the last conference, and will you not now open your lips and praise him for the benefit of his word? Has not the evidence you have lately received of the divinity of scripture been the occasion of increasing your conviction, and the occasion of your conversion, as we humbly hope and trust?

*Sophia.* O Lucinda, if you were more acquainted with the wickedness of my heart, you would be less confident of my conversion. I am afraid to say that I am Christ's disciple. The profession of many, and their subsequent lives, make me tremble when I think about my supposed conversion. All I can say is this: when I read the Bible I think I love God's character, abhor myself, and can submissively lie at his feet and beg for mercy in the name of Christ.

*Lucinda.* If you can say this uprightly, you can say as much as other Christians.

*Sophia.* O, my dear, I say it with a trembling heart. I am afraid of myself.

*Lucinda.* Very well; it is common I believe for God's children to both hope and rejoice with trembling: for their sins are like great mountains, and their virtues like little sands.

*Sophia.* The best evidence I possess of renovation is an increasing esteem for the Bible. The divinity of scripture fills me with the deepest reverence, if I can read my own heart. The Lord grant me grace to study and improve it: for the days of my childhood and youth have been days of vanity indeed. The morning and bloom of my life have been spent foolishly: and I hope all God's children will pray that I may have grace to redeem my time. I have cleared my closet, Lucinda, of those idle tales with which I used to beguile myself and you and other thoughtless associates, and have furnished it with books which correspond with the scripture.

*Eusebia.* We rejoice to hear it: but please to remember, Sophia, that there is no religion in books. The Bible itself is but a dead letter to those who are destitute of divine love. It is the religion of the heart which will be called for at God's tribunal, and not the contents of books. Between the Bible and a new heart there is a lovely correspondence; but between the Bible and the sinner's heart there is none.

*Sophia.* I am sensible of it: and hence, in the view of much corruption of heart, I often fear that my conversion is spurious.

*Theophilus.* Charity hopeth all things: and we will at present hope you are renewed, and wait for the precious fruits of godliness. If you are the subject of grace, you will grow in grace: "For the path of the just is as the shining light, which shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day."

*Fidelia.*

*Fidelia.* While we enjoy the word of God, and possess ample evidence of its divinity, are we not under the greatest obligations to pray and exert all our influence that it may have free course, and in a peculiar manner run and be glorified among the heathen nations? Were we real Christians, what would be our exercises, if our parents, brothers and sisters were now in the midst of pagan darkness, offering sacrifice to demons and inanimate things? Should we not desire to see them dismissed from savage tribes, and conducted into the assembly of Christians? We are at no loss for an answer. Every measure, even at the risk of life, would be used to bless those with the light of the gospel. But pause a moment. Are not all the human race our relatives? Are we not bound to love them as ourselves? The golden rule of rectitude teaches us to treat others as we should wish, on an exchange of conditions, they would treat us. Can we, then, do less than use every method to diffuse the light of the gospel among the millions of those who are destitute of it? Like those females who in their appropriate sphere made preparations for the Tabernacle, we can furnish something which is useful for faithful Missionaries. Let each sister, then, like Dorcas and other female helpers in the church of God, make her offering to support the Missionary interest. The Bible is full of the most noble actions of pious women: and shall *we* be idle? Shall we be negligent at such a day as this, when Missionary Societies invite our influence and aid? We will not make a high estimate of our ability, nor compare ourselves with Esther and her pious maidens: but who knows that some of our feeble sex are not raised up at the present day to honour God, and bless the souls of heathens, by exerting ourselves to promote the interest of gospel missions? Shall we not, in the strength of the mighty God of Jacob, make the attempt?

*Theodore.* We thank Fidelia for her compassion on the heathens. It is hoped the subject we have examined has impressed the minds of others. The ineffable value of the scripture is a sufficient motive to excite us all to exert our influence to enlighten the ignorant Savages.

*Clerus.* It affords me the most sublime pleasure to hear you talk of the importance of gospel missions. It is a subject which must deeply interest the friends of truth. How shall we meet the heathen at the bar of God, if we now neglect the salvation of their souls?

[To be continued.]

SOME



## SOME ACCOUNT OF HANNAH.

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are ; that no flesh should glory in his presence."

**H**ANNAH was a *very simple* young woman. Her natural abilities and her education were below mediocrity. Her situation was such that she had only a few acquaintances. She saw and heard but little of what takes place in the world. Accordingly her knowledge was confined within a very small compass. The language she had been taught was uncommonly plain. She could neither speak nor understand half the words in ordinary use.

Hannah was a *cripple*. In the midst of youth a severe sickness visited her, and separated her from those gaieties and vain amusements which are the common delight and ruin of young people. For more than twelve years, if I mistake not, she was unable to walk or stand. A considerable part of the time she was under the care of physicians. Her pains were often extreme.

Still she was *industrious*. She used to sit up, sometimes in her bed supported by pillows, at other times in a chair ; and, when free from distressing pain, busily employed her time in needlework, in which, considering her advantages, she excelled.

It seems that Hannah's afflictions had, through the divine blessing, a salutary influence upon her mind. The following things are mentioned, as evidence of her piety. I begin with her *contentment* and *patience*. She was pleased with her confinement, and even with her sickness. She thought herself highly favoured in being thus afflicted. Remembering how thoughtless and vain she was while in health, and seeing others as thoughtless as she once was, she viewed it as the greatest kindness, that God had taken away her health. Sometimes, in her unaffected simplicity, she expressed great unwillingness to be freed from sickness and pain ; fearing she should, in that case, get out of the *blessed way* ; which was her phrase for a serious, godly life. She habitually discovered a calm, patient spirit in her greatest sufferings, and sometimes manifested gratitude, that God would take so much notice of her as to *correct* her. When the reason of her contentment was inquired after, it was found to be the all-directing providence of a wise, just and gracious God. It was God's will that made the day of adversity welcome to her.

She appeared *deeply sensible of her own unworthiness and vileness, as a sinner*. She often spoke of it as matter of wonder "how God could look upon such a poor, vile creature as she was." She evidently felt, that hell was her proper desert, and that nothing but *great mercy* could save her. Once she intimated how dreadful it would be to be cast off at last. On being asked why it appeared so dreadful, she burst into tears, and said, she could not bear to think of parting with "*that blessed, lovely Being*."

She was *sensible of the evil of sin in others*. She was grieved at the conduct of careless sinners, and wondered how they could go on, and sin against "that blessed Lord." It was not unusual for her to weep, when she observed misconduct in those around her. Sin was her burden wherever she saw it.

Hannah appeared to be the subject of Christian love. She frequently spoke of God's being lovely and glorious. Christ was infinitely excellent in her view. She placed her heart upon him, and chose to be wholly in his hands. The character and ways of God seemed to be the subject of her daily and most delightful meditation. She loved the Bible, kept it always near her, and, considering her infirmities, read it very diligently. She had an ardent affection for ministers of the gospel. *Happy in her ignorance*, she looked upon them *all, without exception*, to be *the faithful friends* of Christ. She no sooner saw a minister, than her love was kindled; for her pious thoughts immediately flew to Jesus, whose image, she supposed, was to be seen in all his professed servants.

It was observed that religious conversation and prayer generally put her into a very pleasant and delightful frame, which she manifested by remarkable mildness and sweetness in her countenance and words. The exercises of Christian society in her room filled her soul with joy and delight.

I shall now briefly mention the closing scene. I visited her sabbath evening. It was thought her last moments drew near. Though her bodily distress was great, she appeared able to command her feelings, and to devote her mind to religious conversation. Soon after I went in, she told me, she feared that she had, in the time of her sickness, sometimes felt uneasy, and spoken impatient words. She was grieved at the remembrance of any degree of impatience, in herself, which, how great soever her affliction had been, she esteemed very sinful. She wished us to pray that God would forgive her. She seemed to have much clearer views of divine things, than had been usual. In answer to a question which was put, she said, "Six or seven years ago I was a poor, foolish, wicked creature, and did not know that God could *do any thing with me*." Her meaning was, she did not see how God could save such a sinner as she was.



was. I suggested to her, that if she were a real friend to Jesus, she would soon go into the society of saints and angels. "Ah," she said, "I have sometimes thought I could not be in such blessed company, I am such a vile creature." Her mind, a little after, appeared to be in a supplicating frame, which she manifested in such pious breathings as these; "*I do wish and pray, if it be the blessed will of the Lord, that I may be in heaven, that blessed place. But if it is not his blessed will, I can't find any fault. It would be right, if his blessed will should be so.*" She said she had been trying for a long time "to throw off that vile sinfulness," and hoped she should be perfectly delivered at death. Though very desirous to die, she expressed her willingness "to lie down," as long as God pleased, and bear what he should lay upon her without any hard thoughts of him. She thought it wonderful, that he should be "so kind and faithful to such a worthless sinner." Then she appeared in a kind of pious rapture, wishing and hoping "to be with the blessed Lord, and to praise him forever and ever." Just before I left her, she turned to me, and said, I wish and long that you, sir, and father, and mother, and brothers, and sister, and friends, may praise that blessed Lord *forever and ever, ever and ever, Amen.*" I saw her no more. The next morning, when there was but a step betwixt her and death, she said, that Jesus seemed near to her, and she was filled with joy.

"*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*"

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. It plainly appears, that every argument urged against the *doctrine of sovereign grace* in the salvation of sinners may with equal force be urged against the *dispensations of Providence*. That *doctrine* is no more liable to objection, than many *events* which actually take place. In this, and in other things, the word and providence of God exactly harmonize, and happily illustrate each other. He that attentively reads the volume of divine providence and the volume of revelation finds an agreement between them, and clearly sees, that none can speak against what God *says in his word*, without speaking against what he *does in his providence*.

2. How great is the power of religion! The proud, hardened sinner is courageous while danger and death are distant; but when they come near, he turns pale. His strength fails; his heart is full of dismay. But the weakest, the most trembling believers meet death with composure. And no wonder: an Almighty Friend is near. They trust in everlasting strength. Jehovah is their refuge. Death comes to put an end to their sorrows, and bring them to God, their *exceeding joy*.

3. All

3. All the subjects of religion are *one in heart*. The exercise of Christian piety is substantially the same in all. Believers of the greatest natural powers and the highest attainments in knowledge harmonize, *in moral feeling*, with the least in the kingdom of heaven. Before God all natural distinctions disappear. Men of sublime genius, of extensive learning, of refined taste, of lofty spirits, if they would ever see salvation, must come down before the Lord, and feel as the poor sinner feels, when he repents, and humbly cries, "Behold, I am vile ; God be merciful to me a sinner."

## THE EDITORS.

We thank our brother for the preceding narrative. It is simple and sublime, and will, we hope, induce ministers especially to be peculiarly attentive to the feeble sheep and lambs of Christ's flock. The grace of God shines *gloriously* in the salvation of a *Newton*, and more gloriously, if possible, in the salvation of a *simple female*. To love those whom Christ loves, whether rich or poor, learned or simple, is one of the best marks of grace.

## THEORY INFLUENCES PRACTICE.

*Junius.* WELL, Lucius, it is hoped you are convinced that theory has influence on practice.

*Lucius.* Pray what has taken place which revives the subject ?

*Junius.* The duel by those young men with whom we lately conversed, who held that men have a right to terminate their lives when and in what manner they please.

*Lucius.* I have heard that one of them was shot through the heart, and that the other is mortally wounded. I am sorry for their folly : but how does this event affect my theory of sentiment ?

*Junius.* Surely it does : for you contend that if a man conducts properly, it is indifferent what sentiments he embraces.

*Lucius.* You injure me, Junius : I do not think it a matter of indifference whether a man holds that he has a right to take away his own life ; for self-murder is wrong, and ought to be reprobated by all.

*Junius.* If I have misapprehended you, please to put me right.

*Lucius.* My opinion is this, as previously stated : we must all act rightly, whatever be our opinions and sentiments : and if we do what is right, it is of little consequence what we think relative to doctrines.

*Junius.* I understand you as I did at first. This is your theory, that we must act regularly, but that it is a matter of  
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no consequence what sentiments and opinions we entertain relative to our actions. Your theory evidently supposes that neither good sentiment nor a good conscience is necessary. Why do you not assert at once, that a man may be a good Christian, who wholly discards the gospel revelation ; and religious, who denies God's existence ?

*Lucius.* Is it possible ? am I reduced to this ?

*Junius.* Judge for yourself : but please to remember, it is a matter of indifference whether you judge rightly or wrongly, provided you act consistently.

*Lucius.* But how is it possible to act consistently while my conscience and judgment disapprove and condemn my actions ?

*Junius.* I am sure I cannot tell : for all good actions are consonant with the dictates of a good conscience : when we act consistently our conscience and hearts harmonize. The good man keeps a conscience void of offence by doing what she allows and enjoins, and not what she forbids.

*Lucius.* I must confess that my theory is wrong. Instead of its being *uninteresting* what sentiments we entertain, or what conscience we possess, it is *highly interesting* that we entertain just sentiments, and a good conscience.

*Junius.* I am glad you are so capable of conviction : and I hope you will never recur to that dangerous precipice whence thousands have leaped into endless ruin.

*Lucius.* I confess my error, and wish to see the dangerous consequences of it exposed. Alas ! it is impossible for a man to do his duty while he performs what his rightly informed conscience tells him is forbidden by God.

*Junius.* Is it not a fact that men allow themselves in those actions which they think are lawful and right ? Did not Pharaoh retain Israel because he thought it was right ? Did not the heathens in the days of Moses practise idolatry because they thought it was right ? Did not the Jews reject and kill the Messiah because they thought him an impostor ? Did not Saul persecute Christians because he considered them pernicious characters ? Do not Arians, Socinians and Unitarians reject the divinity of Christ because they believe that he is but a creature ? Do not Arminians and Antinomians embrace Christ on the principle of self love, because they disbelieve the doctrine of impartial, disinterested affection ?

I ask again : Do not the Universalists live in a carnal and careless manner because they believe that they shall be finally happy ? And do not all good men carefully live according to the injunctions of the gospel because they believe that without holiness no man will see the Lord ? In a word : have we not all the evidence which the nature of the case affords, that the  
sentiments

sentiments and opinions of men have great influence on their conduct?

*Lucius.* It cannot be denied, for the fact is notorious; and the scripture informs us that evil communication corrupts good manners. The wrong practice of the world is partly owing, at least, to the erroneous tenets and opinions which are entertained.

*Junius.* If this then is the fact, that men are more or less under the influence of opinions and sentiments, what is our duty?

*Lucius.* The path of duty is plain; but I will thank you to point it out, for I am but a learner.

*Junius.* We must read the Bible with impartial hearts, and ascertain the real sentiments of Inspiration. The practice of the noble Bereans is worthy of adoption: for they searched the scriptures daily. The word of God teaches us what actions to omit, and what to perform; what sentiments to embrace, and what to reject; what examples to imitate, and what to avoid. If we adopt this method, we shall be wise, and God will approve our conduct; but if we neglect and disregard the Bible, we have nothing to expect but error and darkness and destruction.

*Lucius.* I desire to be thankful for this conversation. My mind is enlightened. In consequence of being impressed with several authors which fell into my hands, I imbibed the opinion which you have exposed. I foolishly thought that much attention to sentiment was needless: but while Christ and his apostles call me to search the scriptures, and try the spirits; while I see that men are greatly influenced by their opinions and theories of sentiment; I hope by the grace of God to reform. O how dangerous the opinion that it is a matter of indifference what opinions we embrace and entertain!

*Junius.* Surely it is dangerous; for God impresses men with good sentiments to promote holiness; and the adversary impresses men with bad sentiments to promote sin.

The Lord guide us both; and make his word a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path.

#### ANECDOTE OF A COLLIER.

A COLLIER, being examined as to his religious principles, was asked what it was that he believed. He answered, I believe what the church believes. The other rejoined, What then does the church believe? He replied readily, The church believes what I believe. The other, desirous if possible to bring him to particulars, once more resumed his inquiry: Tell me then, I pray you, what is it you and the church both believe? His answer was, Why truly, Sir, the church and I both believe the same thing.

RELIGIOUS



## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

*Particulars respecting the late Revival of Religion in Holles.**[Continued from page 62.]*

**A**S the attention to religion increased, the number of those who attended divine worship increased. Though during the winter travelling was difficult, yet on Sabbath days the house of God, and, on other days in the week, the place appointed for conference, was crowded with attentive hearers.

Some by one motive, and some by another, were excited to attend the means of instruction, before they realized any conviction of sin.

It appears from the testimony of the hopeful subjects of grace, that their minds were first impressed, either in the house of God by the word preached, or at a conference by a particular application of truth to the conscience.

The utility of religious conferences, in connexion with a preached gospel, was very manifest. In one part of the town, where the young people were more given to vanity, and were more inattentive to religious instruction, than in any other, there were but few instances of special attention, and not one among the youth, till after a weekly conference was appointed in that neighbourhood. At the first conference, professors dared not give much encouragement for the continuance of a weekly conference there ; for they said it was not probable the youth would attend. It was, however, continued ; and in the course of a few weeks there was a more general attention among the youth, than in any other neighbourhood in the town.— Similar, though not so visible, were the effects of conferences in general. Some, who seldom attended public worship on the Sabbath, who violently opposed conferences, said, they were by some motives, they knew not what, excited to attend a conference ; and, when they came, they were ashamed to be seen, and afraid of being spoken to ; but before they returned, were solemnly impressed with a sense of their guilty, perishing condition.— Then was realized, by the friends of truth, the fulfilment of this prediction : “ And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.”

The divine influence was evidently manifested in exciting those who opposed themselves, to attend on the means which they had before despised, in applying those truths which they had denied, and in convicting and converting sinners, by that gospel which was to them foolishness. The excellency of the power was, visibly, of God and not of man. Those who felt the power of godliness freely acknowledged that it was not in  
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the power of man to give them such an understanding, realizing sense of those truths, which had been the most obnoxious and offensive to them, or make them believe that their hearts were so fully set in them to do evil. They confessed, that the Spirit of God set home divine truth to their consciences, and forced conviction on their minds, contrary to their desires, and in opposition to every feeling of their hearts; that they were not frightened, as some thought, neither were their passions moved by fictitious, vain imaginations; but, in a rational view of the extent and purity of the holy law of God, they saw, and realized, that every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.

The truth of this confession was not practically denied by any disorder, nor by any excessive vent of the animal passions; but it was evidenced to all beholders by their external deportment, and by their silent, pensive solemnity in times of divine service. No imaginary views of hell, of heaven or of Christ, but a rational belief of truth, applied to the conscience, and a pungent conviction of sin and misery, as they are expressed in the holy scriptures, attended this glorious work, in proportion to the degree of divine influence. Some complained of hardness of heart and blindness of mind; some of enormous guilt, having their sins set in order before their eyes; some of pride and selfishness; and all of a heart totally opposed to God.—The regularity that was observed, the rational assent to truth in those who had openly opposed the doctrines of grace, and the awful sense of sin expressed by persons of every description, removed from the minds of many that prejudice which they had imbibed against revivals of religion; and convinced them that this was the work of God. Some persons of discernment, who had received very unfavourable ideas of such times of refreshing, by reason of the disorder and confusion which have often been considered the immediate effects of divine power on the heart, said, that the different effects of the Divine Spirit, now exhibited before their eyes, convinced them of their mistake, and led them to serious and solemn reflections. All those who customarily attended conferences were rationally convinced of the reality, importance and genuine effects of distinguishing grace. And I cannot conceive that any person of sobriety, who was acquainted with the circumstances of this people, who understood the objections and opposition expressed by many against the leading truths of the gospel, the vain confidence of the self-righteous, and the refuges of lies under which the stupid multitude concealed their guilt, could have attended our conferences, and have been conversant with those under divine impressions, and not have been convinced themselves that God by his Spirit was reproofing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

Arminians,



Arminians, universalists and deists might have seen their moral character laid open before their eyes, their false reasoning exposed to view, and the grounds of their hope vanishing before the clear light of truth. Those of a similar complexion, who, to evade the force of truth, absented themselves from public worship, and shunned the company of their former associates, were unable to secure their consciences from the piercing rays of divine light. The power of godliness was so convincingly and so visibly expressed, that they were compelled to feel and confess its truth and energy, and, to the present time, they have evidenced more or less of the stings of an enlightened conscience. May God, by his grace, enable those who have passed from death unto life, to let their light so shine before their former companions in wickedness, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. But a more particular account of the operation of the Spirit, in his convicting and converting influence, claims a place in this narrative.

The first noticeable effects of the Spirit on the mind, were, a reformation in manners, and a serious attention to the external duties of religion. All kinds of sinful practices, recreations and vain amusements were forsaken and discarded by those under divine impressions. Profane swearing, falsehood and foolish jesting were discountenanced. Tavern haunting and gambling were laid aside, and sobriety, truth and honesty were practised. Religious conversation took the lead in all companies, and morning and evening sacrifices were offered in many families, who had lived without God in the world. This external reformation was the first resort of those whose consciences were awakened, by which they attempted to conceal their guilt, and remove painful emotions from their own breasts.

Persons of every description fled to this strong hold for relief. Though it is more than probable, that some who began in the Spirit, are now in their own view made perfect by the flesh; yet, blessed be God, many were driven from those refuges of lies, and have, in the view of charity, fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. These were convinced of their sin and danger in trusting to their own works, by seeing more clearly the plague of the natural heart, and realizing, that as a man thinketh in his heart so is he in the sight of God; that as the tree is so is the fruit; that "an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things." Finding their hearts altogether selfish, and their affections centring in personal happiness, in opposition to the glory of God, they saw that in all their religious performances their only design was, to secure their own happiness; that they sought their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

All expectations of happiness arising from their own works

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while their hearts were at enmity against God, being now cut off, and realizing that even the "plowing of the wicked is sin;" and that "without faith it is impossible to please God;" their next attempt to extricate themselves from the curse of the divine law, and restore peace to their troubled minds, was to reform their hearts. Instead of seeking salvation with penitent, believing hearts, in holy obedience to the will of God, they now prayed for new hearts, hoping that God would hear their prayers, and deliver their souls from death.

And here some found a resting place, from which it is feared they have never removed. Relying on their prayers for salvation, instead of trusting their souls with Christ in the exercise of holy faith, they silenced their consciences, stifled conviction, quenched the Spirit, and settled down on their lees. But many, whose feet for a time stood on these slippery places, were fully taught, that the prayers of the wicked are abomination to the Lord, that God heareth not sinners, nor calleth his elect with a holy calling according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

The truth of the above observations is evidenced by the experience of many who have now a comfortable hope of salvation through Christ Jesus.

The experience of one, as a specimen of many, it may not be improper briefly to narrate. He had to the age of fifty years maintained a good moral character in the eyes of the world. But soon after the reformation began, his attention was more than usually excited to the truth and importance of experimental religion. And, passing from one degree of impression to another, he was finally convinced that his morality would not save him, that he was condemned by the moral law, and that he was swiftly descending the awful precipice to blackness of darkness. After passing one wakeful night with a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, he retired in the morning for devotion. In the midst of his devotion, Christ, in answer to his prayer, as he then thought, delivered his soul from death, and insured him salvation. His grief and mourning were instantly turned into joy and gladness. He immediately sent a very urgent request to me to come and see him. Accordingly I went. And after passing the usual salutation he requested me, with great animation, to rejoice and praise God with him for what he had done for his soul, adding, Christ has appeared for such a poor creature as I am, and granted me salvation. He then rehearsed to me his experience the preceding evening and morning.



I asked him to relate to me the ground of his present joy and hope? His answer was, Christ has appeared for me and delivered my soul from death. Do you love Christ? Yes. Why do you love him? Because he has appeared for me. Should you love him if you did not think he meant to save you? No. After spending a few moments in this manner of conversation, I laboured to convince him that Christ was lovely in himself considered, and esteemed by Christians the chief among ten thousands, altogether lovely, not merely because they thought he would save them, but because he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and that a person in the exercise of holy affection would love Christ even if he knew he should perish. I told him I had reason to fear that his present joy proceeded from selfish motives, and wholly depended on a hope of being delivered from misery; that all wicked beings would love Christ in the same sense he did, if they could make themselves believe that Christ would save them, and that their joy would be in proportion to the sorrow that preceded it. This appeared to destroy his hope, abate his joy, and excite painful emotions. In a short time after he discovered the ground of his deception, saw more clearly the opposition of his heart to God, realized the moral deformity of impenitent prayers, felt his dependence, and hopefully accepted the punishment of his sins, submitted to divine justice, and trusted in Christ for salvation. All who were the hopeful subjects of special grace, have been, as they thought, not only convinced that an external reformation with an impenitent heart could avail them nothing; but also that their carnal minds were as much at enmity against the gospel as against God; that they were not converted in answer to their impenitent prayers, but according as they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before God in love. Previously to a renovation of heart, they have in a measure realized their dependence and criminality in connexion with each other; their entire dependence on the atonement of Christ for justification, and on the Divine Spirit for a renovation of heart. No one in this situation attempted to justify himself, or plead his dependence as an excuse for impenitence and unbelief: but all approved the divine law, condemned themselves, and acknowledged, that the gospel terms of salvation were reasonable and just. All with whom I conversed while in this condition, confessed, that they were justly condemned to everlasting perdition, and felt themselves sinking under the awful displeasure of a holy God, but had no inclination to repent and receive salvation as a free gift.

Though some had a more realizing, painful view of these truths than others, yet all appeared to understand and realize them

them so far as to despair of salvation, till, by the sovereign grace of God, they were made willing in the day of his power. They, generally, experienced a more rational, painful conviction of sin, than I ever before saw under divine operation.

The greater part of the middle aged, and upward, and of the most moral, and understanding, had such an awful sense of the enmity of their hearts to God and the gospel, that they could scarcely sustain their burdens. The spirits of some were so depressed, and their bodies so debilitated, that to human appearance they could not have lived but a short time without relief. While in this stage of conviction, their passions were unmoved, their hearts hardened in unbelief, and their souls tormented in view of the divine character and government. The consideration that they were in the hands of a sin-hating and sin-avenging God, who was perfectly acquainted with all their iniquities, and who constantly saw the opposition of their hearts to himself, was inconceivably distressing and painful to them.— Yet they were sensible that they could not escape his searching eye, nor free their souls from his sovereign hand. Their feelings cannot be better expressed than in the words of David : “ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there : if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there : if I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me : yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ; but the night shineth as the day : the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” In this trying period, they were taught by painful experience the truth of Christ’s words : “ Ye will not come to me that ye might have life ;” “ No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him.” Finding their hearts totally opposed to God, and the condition on which salvation is offered in the gospel, they saw that nothing short of the exceeding greatness of divine power could bow their wills to the obedience of Christ. Even when all hopes of happiness were cut off, and they were convinced that they must inevitably perish except they exercised repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ, yet their hearts were totally opposed to this, and would not that Christ should reign over them.

Feeling their criminality, not only for hating the character and government of God, but also for hating Christ without a cause, and for refusing to come to him for life, they found themselves in the hands of a sovereign God as clay in the hands of the potter, liable every moment to fall under the weight of his displeasure. The first relief they obtained was in the exercise of unconditional submission to divine justice, and a cordial consent to be at the disposal of a righteous Judge. The alteration which they then perceived in their feelings was, approba-  
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tion in heart to the character and government of God, and a willingness to trust themselves, with the whole universe, in his hands. In the view which they had of the beauty and excellency of divine objects, they lost sight of their personal happiness, which they had previously sought, and gave their whole attention to the glory of God and the general good of his kingdom. At first they had no knowledge of an interest in Christ; neither did they perceive any more ground of hope for their own salvation than before. Some said they were afraid they had lost their conviction, and were returning to their former stupidity; others said, they still felt themselves exposed to hell, but that the law was holy, God righteous, and they were willing he should do his pleasure. They rejoiced that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, that they were under his moral government, and that he worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. Perceiving that they hated those things they once loved, and loved those things they once hated, and that they could willingly trust their souls with Christ, they gradually obtained a hope that they had passed from death unto life.— But there were some whose apparent resignation to divine sovereignty was attended with more clear discoveries of the beauty of holiness, of the way of life through a crucified Redeemer, and with a more sudden transition from darkness to light. Though there was a difference in the degree of conviction, of light and knowledge, in the minds of those who felt the power of godliness on their hearts; yet there was no difference in the nature of submission, nor in the essence of holy affection which followed. All consented to absolute, unreserved submission to the will of God, as the reason of the hope that is within them, and to disinterested affection, as the only trait in their present character by which it is distinguished from their former. They have professedly established their hope in the exercise of this holy love, which denies self, takes up the cross, and follows Christ.

ELI SMITH.

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*Extract of a letter from a respectable clergyman, to his friend, dated Elizabeth Town, N. J. June 17th, 1803.*

VERY DEAR SIR,

**A**FTER arriving at New-York, through divine favour, in health and safety, I hastened to join my Brethern here in a great meeting, the first held in this State, and I have just returned from beholding one of the most interesting and glorious scenes which mortals are permitted to witness.

The meeting was at *Bottle Hill*, a place where in my youth I spent near two years in studies; it began on Tuesday, and continued till Wednesday evening; it took place by a general agreement

agreement of the Presbyterians in this circle. Twenty-three Ministers were present, and an immense concourse of people from all parts of two populous counties. The venerable Dr. M'Whorter presided. The people divided to two stands, one at the meeting house, the other in the fields, and though the effects in kind were not different from what we usually observe at seasons of reformation, yet, to me, many things appeared rare and unusual. The exercises without exception were in a most peculiarly true and elevated style, and were kept up without flagging, yea, appeared to rise from first to last. There was, more than ever I had seen in Christian assemblies, the appearance of an army with banners. Among the saints there was a peculiar trembling of holy fear, and at the same time child-like confidence with respect to the issue: they appeared to meet with all those emotions which arise from being impelled by a sense of duty, to take such steps as would raise high on public ground an expectation, which nothing but the special presence of the Lord Jehovah would answer. And they were not disappointed: peace was given which passeth knowledge, the Spirit to cry Abba Father, and the fulness of the blessing of the gospel was poured upon them; the fellowship of the Spirit and consolation of the Holy Ghost abounded. Many sinners were manifestly touched with the arrows of conviction. After being on the ground so long, the assembly reluctantly broke up, and, as the greater part drew off, it was affecting to see those more deeply impressed, still without motion, scarce looking around them, as if chained to the ground. Among the ministers were some of the first talents, their hearts glowing with devotion, their minds with eloquence, and their tongues made as the pens of ready writers. They appeared as flames of fire. One present, Mr. Finly, of Baskingridge, lately received seventy persons into his church in one day; others have received large numbers.—These, my brother, are wonderful things; we live in wonderful days.

*Extract from a Vermont paper.*

**A** GREEABLE to previous notice given, a large assembly, for the worship of God, convened near Dorset meeting house, on Tuesday last, and continued the exercises through that day and the evening with much solemnity; the number attending was estimated at fifteen hundred. On Wednesday morning religious exercises were resumed, and supported with apparently increasing fervour, with two short intervals, through the day. Towards evening the attendants from a distance generally withdrew, after which the residue, forming still a thronged audience for the meeting house, attended an evening lecture from the aged Mr. Marshal, and continued in solemn exhortation, interesting conference, earnest supplication, and ardent praise, until



a late hour. This evening, at sunset, the returns made to the editor of the numbers withdrawn, by gentlemen who obligingly stationed themselves at the turn of the roads to ascertain the amount of the concourse attending, brought them to fifteen hundred and twenty-nine; and from the appearance of numbers then around the stage, uncounted, it is presumed that the whole number could not have been less than two thousand.

Amidst this great assembly solemnity was universally prevalent, kindness dignified the residents in the neighbourhood, hospitality was universal, and even apparently produced emulation; accomodation was aimed at by the householders, to avoid trouble by the distant attendants, and to enjoy the scene, by the whole collectively. Thus to aid and be aided in their progress heavenward, was apparently the desire of the assembled multitude.

In the course of the exercises, sermons were delivered from the texts following, and by the persons named, viz. A sermon from Luke xiv. 23 :—*And the Lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled*; preached by Mr. Proudfit, of Cambridge, Newyork: A sermon from Psalm l. verse 6 :—*And the heavens shall declare his righteousness*; by Mr. Spaulding: A sermon from Hosea xiii. 9 :—*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help*; by Mr. Haynes, of Rutland: A sermon from Job i. 11 :—*But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face*; by Mr. Hall, of Granville, Newyork: and a sermon from Genesis xxiv. 29 :—*And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left*; by Mr. Spaulding.

The animation of the scene, throughout, was great, the general satisfaction apparent, and the power of divine truth hopefully and extensively operative. A stage was erected, under some shade trees, nearly fronting the meeting house, around which seats were arranged, as conveniently as possible, for the audience. The air was serene and the weather pleasant during the exercises, and not the least accident occurred to interrupt the felicity of the scene, except the fainting of two persons may be deemed such.

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#### ANECDOTE.

A LADY, who had been long in the fashionable world, by hearing Mr. Whitefield preach, became a very constant attender, and appeared under deep conviction of sin, and great concern about the salvation of her soul. She asked him as to the propriety of her attending public places of amusement, card parties, &c. His answer was, "Madam, get converted, and then ask such questions."

POETRY.

## P O E T R Y.

## THE CONCEITED FLY.

'TWAS in the charming month of  
May,  
(No matter, critic, for the day)  
When Phœbus had his noon attain'd,  
And in his blaze of glory reign'd,  
A FLY, as gay as e'er was seen,  
Clad o'er in azure, jet, and green,  
Gay, for his part, as birthday beau,  
Whose soul is vanish'd into show,  
On PAUL's fam'd temple chanc'd to  
light,  
To ease his long, laborious flight.  
There, as his optics gaz'd around,  
An inch or two their utmost bound,  
He thus began :—" Men vainly tell  
How they in works of skill excel :  
This edifice they proudly show,  
To prove what human art can do.  
'Tis all a cheat—before my eyes  
What infinite disorders rise !  
Here hideous cavities appear,  
And broken precipices there :  
They never us'd the plane or line,  
But jumbled heaps without design."

He ceas'd, contemptuous ; and, as  
FLIES  
Discern with microscopic eyes,  
From what he saw he reason'd right :  
But how inadequate his sight  
To mark the building from its base,  
The pillar-pomp, the sculptur'd grace,  
The dome, the cross, the golden ball,  
Much less the grand result of all !

So impious WITS, with proud disdain,  
REDEMPTION's hidden ways arraign,  
Deem it beneath a BEING wise ;  
And, judging with their insect eyes,  
View but a part, and then deny  
Th' ETERNAL WISDOM of the sky.

But can thy ken, presumptuous MAN,  
Unfold this deep and wondrous plan ?  
As well might insect organs see  
Th' harmonious structures rais'd by  
thee,

As thine imperfect tube explore  
This wise and gracious system o'er :

" For in the grace that rescu'd man,  
God's brightest form of glory shines ;  
Here on the cross 'tis fairest drawn,  
In precious blood, and crimson lines.

Here his whole name appears  
complete,  
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,  
Which of the letters best is writ,  
The POWER, the WISDOM, or the  
LOVE." SELECTED.

EPHESIANS IV. 26.

*Be ye angry and sin not : let not the  
sun go down upon your wrath.*

O Let me lay my anger by,  
And bid my wrath be gone,  
Or from it let me rather fly,  
Before the setting sun.

Can comfort in my bosom rest  
When I in anger speak ?  
Let me with tenderness be blest ;  
Lord, make me truly meek.

Lest I should wear a false disguise,  
Or once malicious prove,  
O make me as the serpent wise,  
And harmless as the dove.

Still let me guard my heart with care,  
And ev'ry passion curb,  
Lest pride should get dominion there,  
And sin my peace disturb.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

✿ The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine will in  
future be published by Mr. ETHERIDGE, in Charlestown,  
where subscribers may receive them. They may also be  
had, as usual, at the store of Mr. GEORGE ODIORNE,  
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